

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1172

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BISSAU 0575

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PU, GV

SUBJECT: BISSAU AND CONAKRY

REF: BISSAU 0556

1. GUINEA-CONAKRY AMBASSADOR BOCAR BIRO BARRY RAISED EYEBROWS IN BISSAU MAY 14 WITH A SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS - ON OCCASION OF HIS NATIONAL DAY - WHICH CAST DARK SHADOWS ON THE RECENT BISSAU-CONAKRY RAP-ROACHMENT. IN A PRE-ARRANGED PRESS CONFERENCE AND LATER IN HIS RECEPTION TOAST, BARRY FLATLY REJECTED THE GUINEA-BISSAU VIEW ON THE MARITIME BORDER QUESTION AND EMPHASIZED THE PATRONING THEME OF A "GREATER REPUBLIC OF GUINEA" WHICH SO IRRITATES THE BISSAU LEADERSHIP.

2. IN HIS AFTERNOON PRESS CONFERENCE, AMBASSADOR BARRY MADE THE FOLLOWING REPLIES TO QUESTIONS:

A) ON THE MARITIME BORDER PROBLEM: THE TERRITORIAL SEA BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF GUINEA - A GREATER GUINEA - AND SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN COMMON. THERE
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IS, THEREFORE, NO BORDER PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED.

B) ON ECOWAS (ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION OF WEST AFRICA): ECOWAS IS A RECREATION OF THE OLD, MANDINGA EMPIRE; COVERING THE SAME PEOPLES LIVING IN THE SAME TERRITORIES AND SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE.

3. IN HIS LONG TOAST REMARKS MADE THAT EVENING AT

HIS NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION, BARRY REPEATED THE THEME OF A GREATER GUINEA WITH ITS TWO CAPITALS, OF THE BROTHER PARTIES, AND THE "PARTIE-ETAT". FROM BEGINNING TO END, BARRY ADOPTED THE PATRONIZING LINE WHICH FIRST CAUSED THE GOGB TO REACT AGAINST SEKOU TOURE'S PATRONAGE AFTER INDEPENDENCE, WHICH IN TURN RESULTED IN CONAKRY'S COLDNESS TOWARDS BISSAU. (SEKOU TOURE WITHDREW HIS AMBASSADOR IN 1976 AND DID NOT REPLACE HIM UNTIL JANUARY 1978 WHEN BARRY ARRIVED.)

4. COMMENT: BARRY'S COMMENTS ON "GREATER GUINEA" ARE IRRITATING TO THE GOGB WHICH INSISTS ON ITS INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY. MORE POINTED WERE BARRY'S REMARKS ON THE MARITIME BORDER QUESTION WHICH FOLLOWS BY ONLY FIVE DAYS AFTER GUINEA-BISSAU PRESIDENT LUIS CABRAL'S RINGING DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (BISSAU 556). BARRY'S THESIS OF THE COMMON SEAS IS FLATLY OPPOSED TO CABRAL'S STATEMENT OF THE GOGB POSITION WHICH INSISTS ON THE NEED FOR A CLEAR DEFINITION OF THE BORDER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OAU PRINCIPLES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW.

5. BARRY'S STATEMENTS, MADE ON HIS INITIATIVE AND QUITE DELIBERATELY, ARE PUZZLING IN LIGHT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONAKRY'S POLICY OF RAPPROACHMENT WHICH BEGAN LAST FALL AT GUINEA-BISSAU'S RULING PARTY CONGRESS. BARRY IS NOT A STUPID MAN AND HIS OWN CAREER SINCE 1959 AS A CLOSE INTIMATE OF SEKOU TOURE TESTIFIES TO HIS POLITICAL SKILLS. ANY LIGHT EMBASSY CONAKRY CAN THROW ON THIS EVENT WOULD BE MOST WELCOME. ORUM

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